

VZCZCXYZ0003
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAK #3045/01 3621132
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 281132Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4784
INFO RUEHGH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY 8578
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 1101
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY 0105
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 1685
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0168
RUEHYE/AMEMBASSY YEREVAN PRIORITY 1318
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA// PRIORITY
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA PRIORITY 0081

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 003045

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/27/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [OREP](#) [AM](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [TU](#) [KV](#) [IS](#) [KPAL](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: CODEL SKELTON DISCUSSES REGIONAL ISSUES
WITH TURKISH LEADERSHIP

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

Summary

¶1. (C) President Gul, PM Erdogan, DCHOD Saygun and DefMin Gonul all expressed satisfaction with U.S. support to Turkey against PKK terrorism. The Turkish people have a more positive view of the U.S. as a result. Codel Skelton stressed the common struggle against terrorism and U.S. understanding for recent Turkish strikes against PKK terrorists in northern Iraq. Citing the concerns of Ambassador Crocker and Gen Petraeus in Iraq, the Codel stressed that Iraq's stability must not be jeopardized. The members explained that Congress did not intend to irritate Turkey by considering an Armenian genocide resolution but rather had hoped to address the events of 1915 and put them behind us. Expressing appreciation for Turkey's role in Middle East peace efforts, Codel asked for Turkey's support with Iran and Syria. Members urged Turkey to consider early recognition of an independent Kosovo. Erdogan and Gul made no commitment on recognition but stated Turkish policy is in line with ours. End summary

PKK/Iraq: Must Preserve Iraq Stability

¶2. (C) Turkish officials all expressed appreciation for intensified U.S. cooperation with Turkey against the PKK, as promised by President Bush during his November 5 meeting with PM Erdogan. PM Erdogan stated that the bilateral cooperation had resulted in a fundamental shift in how the U.S. is perceived in Turkey and is a good example of our strategic partnership. DCHOD Gen Saygun contrasted Turkey-U.S. cooperation against the PKK with lack of action on the part of several European allies. Codel members expressed understanding for recent Turkish strikes against PKK targets in northern Iraq. They also conveyed the concerns expressed to them by Ambassador Crocker and Gen Petraeus in Iraq that Turkish airstrikes on December 16 went further than we would have wished. They reminded Turkish officials of the importance of supporting, not undermining, stability in Iraq. PM Erdogan rebuffed this concern and referred to his November 5 meeting with President Bush. Saygun assured the Codel that Turkey would only target the PKK and not civilians, recognizing that Turkey's stability is directly

related to Iraq's. President Gul equated U.S. success in Iraq with Turkey's success. He added that the PKK is also a threat to Iraqi Kurds and speculated that Kurdish authorities privately welcomed Turkish strikes.

Iran's Nuclear Ambitions

13. (C) Gen Saygun told the Codel that, while he hoped the National Intelligence Estimate's judgment that Iran had ceased its nuclear weapons program in 2003 was correct, he was not confident Iran had given up its efforts. At the same time, Iran is using Shi'a populations to increase its regional influence. Defense Minister Gonul said he opposed any of Turkey's neighbors having nuclear weapons, but was skeptical Iran was seeking to develop a nuclear weapon, citing lack of evidence from the IAEA. Governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) MP and NATO Parliamentary Group member Vahit Erdem stated he believed Iran had the intention to develop a nuclear weapon. He and Gonul both suggested that, should Iran acquire a nuclear weapon, it would be difficult for any Turkish government to resist doing so as well, although it would be an expensive and futile exercise. Rep Engel voiced his own skepticism about Iran's intentions and asked for continued Turkish support to help thwart Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Kosovo: Recognition of Independence

14. (C) Rep Engel urged Turkey to recognize Kosovo's independence, once it is declared, describing Turkey as an important player in the Balkans. While not committing Turkey to any recognition timetable, President Gul stated that

Kosovo's independence was inevitable, but must be handed wisely to ensure a smooth transition. PM Erdogan assured the Codel that Turkey's thinking is in line with the U.S. approach.

Armenian Genocide Resolution

15. (C) Codel members explained to Turkish officials that House consideration of an Armenian genocide resolution was in no way intended as an insult to Turkey or meant to undermine bilateral relations. The intent was to address a difficult historical event and then put it behind us. Most members of Congress were not aware of the depth Turkey's feelings about Armenian genocide claims. The Codel expressed doubt that the resolution will come to a floor vote soon. They opined that Turkey should work harder to explain its views in the U.S. President Gul and DCHOD Saygun stressed that Turkey feels no enmity towards Armenia and has made gestures, including the opening of Ottoman archives and a proposal to establish a joint historical commission open to third parties, to encourage an academic analysis of the events of 1915. Meanwhile, Turkey allows flights to and from Armenia, tolerates 40 thousand or more illegal Armenian workers, and has opened its NATO facilities and activities to Armenian participation, gestures to which Armenia has not responded.

16. (C) PM Erdogan pointed out a number of bills and resolutions that Turks perceive as being "anti-Turkey" pending before the Congress, including several dealing with Turkey's relations with Greece and Cyprus, such as H.R. 199, H.R. 407, H.R. 627, H.R. 695, and H.R. 1456, among others. No other ally of the United States seems to be subject to as many negative legislative initiatives. Noting that Turkey-Greece relations have never been stronger, Erdogan said a few historical issues remain outstanding. Turkey needs U.S. support to help resolve them.

Syria and Middle East

17. (C) The Codel expressed thanks for Turkey's efforts to promote peace in the Middle East, including its participation

in the Annapolis talks. Members expressed particular appreciation for Turkey-Israel ties. Gen Saygun noted that Israeli officers were in his headquarters the same day for high level defense talks. President Gul stressed Turkey's efforts to take advantage of its historical links to both Israel and the Arab states to promote peace. He described the joint visit of Israeli President Peres and Palestinian Authority President Abbas, as well as Turkey's commercial and economic initiatives aimed at giving the Palestinian people some hope for the future.

18. (C) The Codel asked for Turkey's support to discourage Syrian meddling in Lebanon and support for terrorism. DCHOD Saygun stated that Bashar Asad is more reasonable than his father, but remains under the influence of his father's advisors. Turkey is trying to convince Bashar to turn towards the West, rather than towards Iran and the East.

19. (U) The Codel did not have an opportunity to clear this cable.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON